

BOTHRIEMBRYON BARRETTI DISCARDS ITS EPIPHRAGM

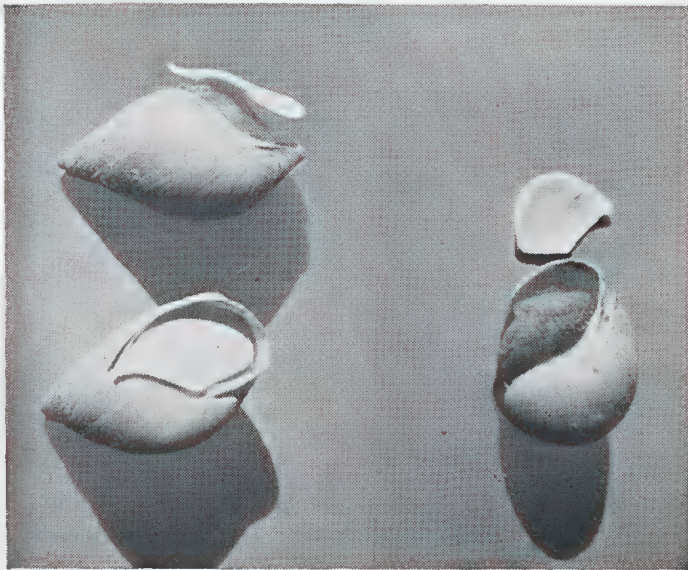
BOTHRIEMBRYON BARRETTI Iredale 1930

By THELMA HARTLEY*

This one inch long native Australian land snail belongs to the peculiar family Bothriembryontidae so well developed in South-Western Australia. It is one of over thirty species of the genus, and it is named after the great Victorian Naturalist, Charles Barrett. A few living and dead specimens were taken by myself on a recent expedition to Western Australia, between Madura and Cocklebiddy in the Nullabor Plains, on 18th September, 1956.

An interesting fact is that I found operculum-like objects of thin white calcereous structure, literally covering the ground for about three feet underneath nearly every bush. The living snails had the "operculum" stuck to the foot on an area no larger than a pin's head, and it moved in and out with the foot almost like a true operculum. There are no operculate land snails in Southern Australia, so that the white objects proved to be epiphragms about to be and already dispensed with.

Colour slides were taken of this extraordinary occurrence and black and white photographs made from them of the shells and epiphragm are reproduced here.



Bothriembryon barretti Iredale, with epiphragm.
Nullabor Plains, 18th Sept., 1956.

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